Allandale Neighbor

Apr 2013
Vol 28, Issue 2

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Screen Porches in Allandale

Tom Linehan

I am writing this article on my back porch while I keep an eye on my BoilerMaker as it heats up the wort for my next batch of beer. If the brew gets too hot at this stage of the cycle it messes up the chemistry of the wort, which means I could end up with five gallons of beer for my nephews (they're over 21) instead of for myself.

If you are considering adding on a screen porch to your house, I recommend it. Our screen porch is furnished with a hammock, two comfy chairs, a table for eating, and a potting table with a sink. I tell you this to give you some sense for the versatility of a screen porch. At our house, it is a utility room and a place for relaxation. In Allandale, a porch is a nice to have, but without the screens, you will be terrorized by the mosquitos, especially if you live close to the creek like we do.

Linehan Screen Porch on Bullard Dr

We don't use our porch everyday but we do use it a lot. Of course there are a few months in the winter when it is too cold to go out on the porch and at least three months in the summer when it is just brutally hot. Overall, we use it about seven months out of the year.

Pardon me if I come across as snooty, but the hammock on our porch, a recent addition, is perfectly situated along the back of the porch with a view into the trees. It is a great place to lie down and read or nap or watch the birds in the huge live oak trees we have in our backyard. In addition to spending time on the porch, we keep open the door from the house into the porch, which creates a cross breeze in the house.

I put a call out to the neighborhood via the list-serv to find out who else in the neighborhood has a screen porch. The idea of writing an article about screen porches came from a neighbor who has a screen porch and whose friend in the

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HAVE YOU RENEWED YOUR MEMBERSHIP?

The next ANA EC Meeting is April 25, 6:30 p.m., at the Northwest Recreation Center, 2913 Northland Drive. The meeting is open to the public.

The Allandale Neighbor
is published bimonthly by the
Allandale Neighborhood Association (ANA)

www.allandaleneighbor.com

INTERIM EDITOR Laura Pressley
ADVERTISING Cathy Savage, 348-8237
allandaleneighbor@gmail.com
LAYOUT, DESIGN Cathy Savage
PRINTER Worley Printing

A SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR
ADVERTISERS AND CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

CONTACT INFORMATION
Allandale Neighbor,
PO Box 10886, Austin, TX 78766-1886
allandaleneighbor@gmail.com

ANA Executive Committee

PRESIDENT David Mintz
VICE PRESIDENT Kata Carbone
TREASURER Laura Pressley
SECRETARY Karen Knight
BOARD MEMBERS Joi Chevalier, Bryan Glass, John Keohane, Jeff Marshall, Marlene Meador, Cynthia Pryor, and Laura Slaughter. Donna Beth McCormick is the Immediate Past President.

ANA General Meetings are held March and September on the fourth Thursday of the month.

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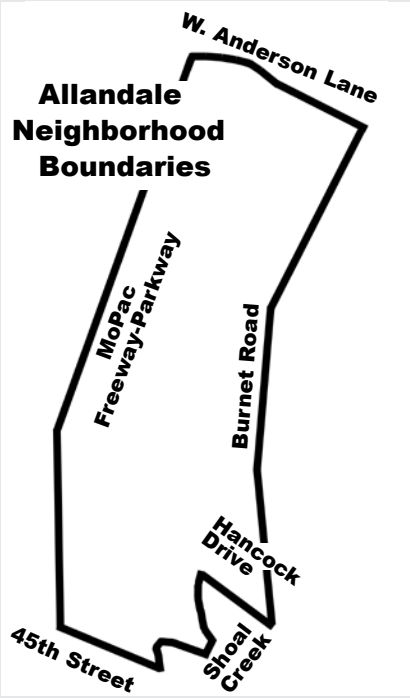
Allandale Police District Rep.

APD Region 1 District Rep (serves Allandale north of Hancock): Ofc. Jud Chapman, 974-4705, *judson.chapman@austintexas.gov*
APD Region 2 District Rep (serves Allandale south of Hancock): Ofc. Josh Metteauer, 974-8124, *joshua.metteauer@austintexas.gov*



ANA President's Letter

David Mintz

A little over a year ago the Allandale Neighborhood Association (ANA) Executive Committee voted to form a special committee to study the idea of creating a pocket park and nature trail along the Shoal Creek Greenbelt.

The committee put a tremendous amount of effort into this project and developed a concept that would create low-impact dirt trails using city-owned land, including parts of the Northwest Recreation Center, the east side of Shoal Creek Greenbelt near 2222 and Shoal Creek, unused land along the far east side of Austin Memorial Park, and the neighborhood south of Hancock Drive. The proposal also includes a goal of removing invasive plants, restoring native plants and cleaning up trash and debris, including an area that has been used as a homeless camp.

Neighbors along Turnabout Lane are concerned about the possible unintended consequences of having a trail behind their homes, while cemetery advocates, already troubled by the way the city and contractors have maintained the property over the years, have been concerned about how the cemetery would be impacted.

At the February Executive Committee meeting, almost the entire meeting was devoted to hearing the park committee's report and concerns about the proposal.

David Mintz

The Executive Committee passed two resolutions. The first called for exploring options that would not infringe on the cemetery. The second stated that any action by the Allandale Neighborhood Association on the issue would be decided at a general membership meeting.

I don't know whether a formal park and nature trail will ever be developed in the area. If the neighborhood association ultimately decides to back the full plan or some modified version of it, it will need city approval and funding. If land at Austin Memorial Park is used, it will take court action to remove dedication from that portion of the land.

Regardless of the outcome, I hope we can work together to clean up this neglected area and that all of us will continue to advocate that the city properly maintain Austin Memorial Park and the surrounding land.

Want to get more involved in ANA?

Drop me an email at *dmintztx@yahoo.com*. Our Nominations Committee for next year's Executive Committee is getting underway. Elections will be at our September meeting. We have a monthly meeting that generally runs about two hours. In addition, all EC members are asked to either chair or work on an association committee, i.e. Zoning, Membership, Events, etc.

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Special Forum on Proposed Traffic Signal

There will be a forum with residents from Allandale and Brentwood, as well as city staff, to discuss a possible traffic signal at the intersection of Burnet and Adams / Shoalmont. The meeting will be from 6:00 – 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, April 25 at the NW Rec Center. Note: The regular Executive Committee meeting that evening will start at 7:00 p.m. ❖

Open Artist Studios in Allandale, April 27 & 28, May 4 & 5

Cathy Savage

Big Medium's West Austin Studio Tour begins its 2nd annual two weekend tour April 27. Established last year, the tour is Big Medium's answer to its popular east side tour, or EAST. Allandale boasts at least two stops on the tour (see ads, directly below this article).

You can pick up a map at your local library, free of charge, or purchase the WEST catalog and map at Grey Duck Gallery or Women and Their Work—or check out the catalog online by visiting *http://west.bigmedium.org/catalog.html.* ❖

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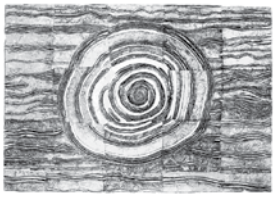
April 27 & 28 May 4 & 5



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For complete event details, visit http://west.bigmedium.org

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Help Wanted!

we need you

Do you have untapped talents as a writer, an editor, or a project manager? The Allandale Newsletter would love to have your help! We're looking for people willing to write articles (on an Allandale-related topic like habitat, school activities, restaurants or other places of interest going up in our quickly changing neighborhood) just once or on a regular basis. We're also very much in need of people who are willing to help with the newsletter in an editorial capacity, for instance gathering content from our neighborhood contributors and reviewing articles before they go to copy-editing. You don't need any prior experience, just ability and the desire to help make our neighborhood newsletter even better. Please contact Joi (*kitjer@snikte.net*) or Laura (*purerainlaura@aol.com*); we would love to hear from you!

The ANA Wants Your Opinions

The ANA (Allandale Neighborhood Association) Communications team is in the midst of strategic planning, looking ahead to this year and beyond. Our area is growing and we'd like to find the best ways to stay connected with you regarding key Allandale issues and events, along with understanding which key city initiatives that affect the neighborhood are most important to you. If you haven't yet, please take a few minutes to fill out a short survey on issues and communications. This will assist us and the Board members greatly in understanding our demographics, interests, concerns, and best means of staying in touch. You can find the survey at *https://www. surveymonkey.com/s/allandalesurvey*.

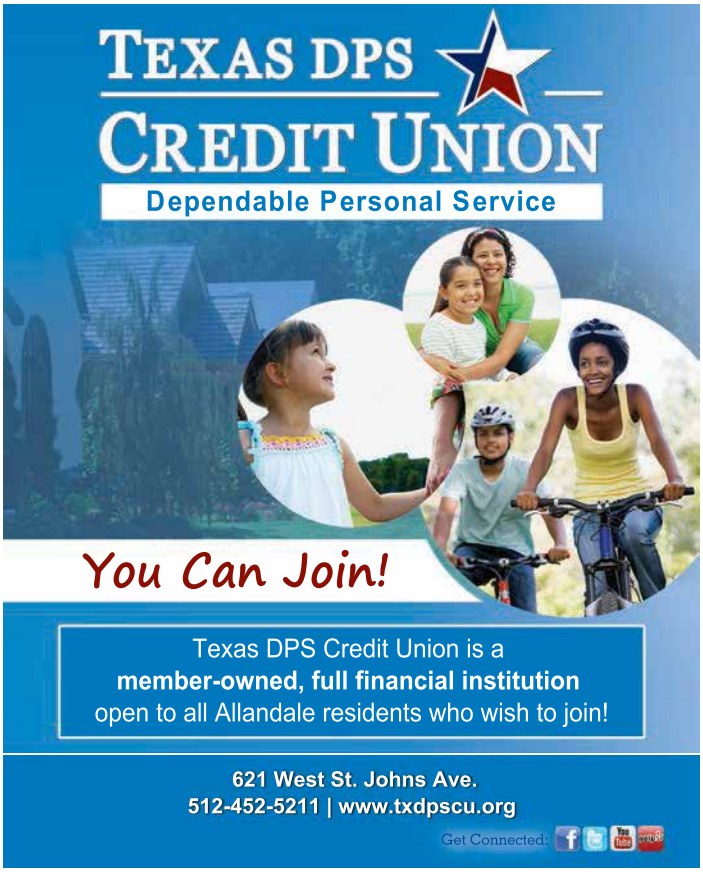
If you haven't yet, please take a few minutes to fill out a short survey on issues and communications

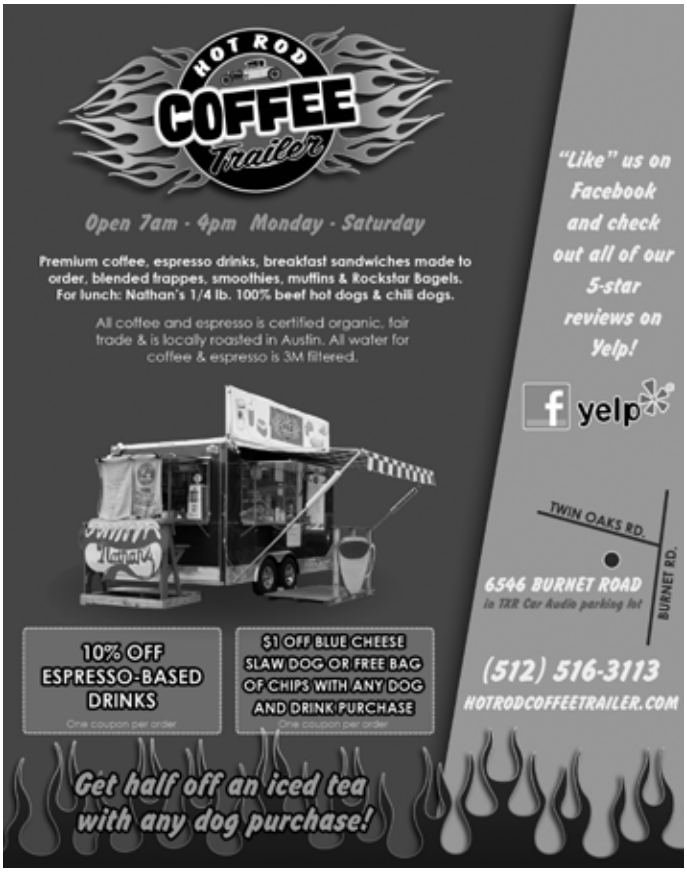
Allandale Neighborhood Garage Sale

Laura Slaughter

"Parachute. Only used once, never opened."

It is always a wonder what you might find at a garage sale and what memories might be evoked. I remember seeing a set of toadstool canisters and was instantly transported back to my mother's avocado green and harvest gold kitchen that I knew as a child. Items that some see as junk, antiquated and dull can often stir memories long forgotten. I guess that is why I not only like to go to garage sales, but also to have them. I invariably hear stories about how an item reminds them of something in their life. I have purchased a Phyllis Diller cigarette wand, cat eye glasses, old fishing gear that reminded me of times I went fishing with my grandfather and great uncle and their friendly competition. My grandfather would continually buy the newest and best fishing reel or lure, while my great uncle always used a cane pole and what was left over from breakfast. My uncle's catch was always superior, which was a





constant thorn in my grandfather's side. I see albums from a bygone era featuring musicians with outlandish hairstyles that were once all the rage. I can't believe that I had actually had a crush on Davy Jones.

The Allandale Neighborhood Association will be sponsoring its annual garage sale on Saturday, May 4, from 8:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. The event will be advertised, a google map with the houses having sales on a route will be made, and free yard signs for ANA members will be provided. This is just one of the services that the ANA offers to its members. Membership is only $15 per year ($7 for seniors), with all proceeds going to support neighborhood activities.

For any households that have items that they would like to purge from their home, but don't have enough for a garage sale, an Allandale site at the southeast corner of Lamar middle school (across from St. John's) will be set up to drop items off. Items will be considered a donation to ANA and what doesn't sell will be donated. Likewise, anyone closing up their garage sale can bring any unsold items to the Allandale site before 2:00 p.m. From 2:00 until 4:00 everything will be half off. All proceeds from that location will go to the neighborhood association. If you are not interested in having a garage sale, think about going to visit some of the sales or volunteering to work at the Allandale site. We would love to have some more hands to help. Event chairs can be reached at 825-2288 (Laura) or 422-8749 (Marlene).

"Nothing is ever really lost to us as long as we remember it." – L.M. Montgomery ❖

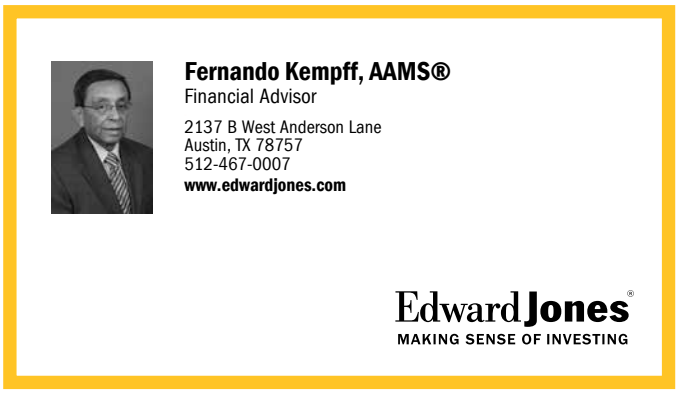
"Bring the World in" by Hosting an Exchange Student

Carolyn Opps

Building bridges of understanding between cultures is more important now than ever. We are looking for local families to step forward to host some remarkable teens for the coming school year as part of an exchange experience. Our community is an ideal environment for hosting high school students from around the world!

PAX (Program of Academic Exchange, *http://pax.org/*) students were selected to participate in the program for their English skills, academic ability and personality. The program provides them with an intensive orientation before they come, health insurance, and an active local coordinator who will help the students and the community to get the most out of the experience. It doesn't take much to host – just providing a place to sleep and study and an extra place at the table for a new "son" or "daughter." Everyday activities will take on a new meaning when you share them with a student who is eager to discover the American way of life. At the same time, your family will learn and grow as you exchange ideas and compare lifestyles. Please contact Carolyn Opps at 740-1419, or email at *carolynopps@yahoo.com* to find out more about this terrific opportunity! ❖

ALLANDALE IS WIRED Current Allandale Listserve Membership: 1190+ (see www.allandaleneighbor.com on how to join)
Average number of daily visits to the Allandale web site: 60



Neighborhood Watch

Laura DiCarlo

Since my last article in the January newsletter, safety committee activity has included helping organize a CPR training, the start of a walking graffiti removal patrol, more graffiti removal around Allandale, and a missed Commander's Forum. There have been house and car break-ins to report as well.

EMS Fire fighter Hilary Higdon trained 44 people at the Take 10 CPR class held February 16 at the Northwest Recreation Center. Thanks to Allandale resident Jenny Peterson, who brought the idea to the safety committee and organized the training. Jenny was going to get trained due to her husband's heart condition and wanted to bring the program to others. It was a big success, and we'd like to offer it every year during Valentine's Day weekend. Thanks to NW Rec for allowing us to use the center for free.

Graffiti in Allandale continues to be an issue, and a few women in the Shoalmont neighborhood (the section of Allandale west of Shoal Creek and south of Hancock) have taken on graffiti removal on foot. Thanks to Kata Carbone, Louisa Hoberman, Pat green, and Carol Walker.

I continue to remove graffiti I see throughout Allandale as well. It is amazing how much we have, and the sooner we report and remove it or get it removed the better off our neighborhood is.

The Austin Police Department has divided Austin into a number of sectors to facilitate police work. Allandale falls into both the Ida Sector and the Baker Sector. The Ida Sector Commander's Forum took place on April 2, but I am sorry to report that I was unable to attend. There was to be a presentation about WanderID, which is based on sophisticated face recognition technology. First responders such as police officers and EMTs use WanderID to identify unknown individuals and connect them with their parents or caregivers in minutes. We had representatives from Allandale who were set to attend but the storm that night got in the way. We are hoping there will be a repeat of the Wander ID information session at a future forum.

Most of Allandale falls into the Ida sector, but the southern region is in Baker, and the next Baker Sector Commander's Forum will be May 7, 2013 at McCallum High School, 5600 Sunshine Drive, from 7:00 p.m. until 8:30 p.m.

As always, please contact me at *lhdicarlo@yahoo.com* or 529-1701 if you are interested in becoming a block captain or patrol. Thanks! ❖

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Real Estate Corner

David Starry

Back in 1978, while I was finishing an undergraduate degree at UT, my family bought a house on Cary Drive that I found with the help of a local realtor. I rented it (at a very fair price) with my brother, who was also a student at UT. The purchase price for a two bedroom, one bath car with a one car garage was $55,000! Three years later I graduated, got my real estate broker's license, and the house on Cary Drive became my first listing. We sold it for $69,000 – a modest return on our investment. Austin's population at the time was about 331,900. Fortunately, I moved back into the Allandale neighborhood in 1997, and I still love being here.

Now, as we enter the second quarter of 2013, many landmarks around the Allandale area are much the same – Northwest Park hasn't changed much, HEB is still here, and the Shoal Creek greenbelt remains pristine. However, with population growth and increasing density, Allandale is growing fast and changing too. The City population is now about 842,750 – an increase of over 153%. For the Allandale area, bounded by 45th Street to the south, MoPac Boulevard to the west, Anderson Lane to the north, and Burnet Road to the east, here are the residential real estate statistics, derived from the Austin Central Texas Realty Information Service (our local MLS):

For the first quarter of 2013, 31 homes sold, for an average price of $459,767.00. The average price per square foot was $242.64, and the average number of days on the market was 40. The average sold to list price ratio was 99%. Sold prices ranged from $288,500 to $740,000.

Compare these figures to the first quarter of 2012: 35 homes sold, for an average price of $359,259.00, average price per square foot $199.52, and average days on market 57. The average sold to list price ratio was 95%. The average price has increased by 28.0%, and the average price per square foot is up 21.6%.

As of April 11, there were nine homes available for sale, representing less than 30 days of available inventory, and 28 sales pending. It is definitely a seller's market!

Sorting the area by zip code for the first quarter of 2013, the statistics look like this:

78757: 13 Homes Sold; average price, $378,169; average price per sq. ft., $216.28; average days on market, 20; average list price to sold price ratio, 99%

78756: 15 Homes Sold; average price, $523,606; average price per sq. ft., $262.51; average days on market, 57; average list price to sold price ratio, 98%

78731: 3 Homes Sold; average price, $494,166; average price per sq. ft., $257.51; average days on market, 45; average list price to sold price ratio, 100%

Every one of our homes is unique. Real estate values are driven by location, as well as by the specific style, condition, and amenities of each property. For more information about the value of your home, contact your favorite Allandale area realtor. ❖

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Updates on the Proposed Development on Bull Creek Road

Joe Reynolds

The Allandale neighborhood Association (ANA) has formed a Special Committee to work on issues concerning a proposed massive development on a vacant heritage tract located at Bull Creek Road and 45th Street. Last June Allandale neighborhood members were alerted to the likely development of this property and began cooperating with other concerned neighbors in Rosedale, Ridglea, Oakmont Heights, Westminster Manor, and the Highland Park West / Balcones Area.

In July, at a House State Affairs Committee oversight hearing, the Texas Facility Commission (TFC) presented plans for development at the Capitol, and on the tract at Bull Creek Rd and 45th Street. Stratus Development (of the W Hotel) met with the neighbors and disclosed preliminary plans for a large HEB, a gas station, approximately 850 apartments in several six-story buildings, a movie theater, office towers, retail, and a liquor store.

Allandale formed a committee to address neighborhood issues. We have 17 houses along 45th Street backing directly to the tract. There were immediate concerns about light, noise, traffic, and loss of a beautiful heritage green space. The tract is a remnant of the Republic of Texas, commissioned for a segregated "deaf & dumb school." Until the '90s it housed a MHMR facility along a portion of Bull Creek Rd about 42nd to Jackson Street, the remainder being virgin land – meadows of wild flowers and about 70 heritage Live Oak trees. The vacant part has remained undeveloped due to Bob Bullock having it designated for the benefit of the Texas State Cemetery, which currently has no plans to use the tract and is more likely to sell it or lease it out in the future. There are no graves, but the designation made development inconvenient.

45th and Bull Creek tract no trespassing

That was the case until June last year, when the TFC used a newly passed law on Public Private Partnerships (P3) to accept "unsolicited proposals" to develop the Bull Creek Road property. The TFC administers affairs for the Texas State Cemetery Committee.

The neighborhood groups recognized

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several problems and issues, such as the fact that the new P3 legislation allowed for no community voice on development and allowed much of the state process to be carried out secretly. So we began efforts to convince the Legislature to amend the P3 process. Another issue was appropriate design, so we began working on design standards to influence how any building would be done, and one focused on land utilization. Traffic concerns was the issue that was most common to the neighbors (the intersection of 45th and Bull Creek is extremely congested on a regular basis, backing traffic onto MoPac); this was left as a "derivative" issue to be addressed through the other efforts.

The legislative effort is now "in session." The neighbors worked with the Sunset Commission staff to report on TFC's use of P3s. The Sunset Staff Report identified deficiencies in Sections 1-3 of TFC's P3 processes. Neighbors testified at the hearings and submitted documentation of abusive use of the law. Senators and Representatives responded. Bills are now in hearing to alter the P3 law and give transparency to the process; the P3s would come under the "Public Information Act" provisions, would require a public hearing at the site of any project, would require a "Public Purpose" for a project, would apply local land use regulation, and would restrict possible conflicts of interest. The Senate has passed a bill sponsored by Senators Watson and Eltife, with no opposition, which will accomplish these "good government" goals. The House sponsor for the revisions is Rep. John Davis of Houston, who carried the original P3 legislation, and who is committed to the added transparency. Any TFC P3 activity is currently delayed until next September when the Sunset laws will be in effect.

The Design Standards effort has published guidelines for any development. The guidelines would manage light, noise, and neighborhood impact. Renowned architects and city designers who are neighborhood residents (and UT professors) led the effort.

The Land Utilization effort has documented the tract, its flowers and its trees. A brochure promoting the tract as Open Space is just beginning to be compiled. Meetings and discussions with Austin PARD and Watershed give hope of at least part of the vacant tract being acquired and not developed – it fits with the PARD master plan goal of extending the Shoal Creek Trail northward past 38th Street. Bond money is available.

You can find news and documents, such as the Design Standards, at the Facebook page for the Bull Creek Road Coalition: *http://www.facebook.com/pages/Bull-Creek-Road-Coalition/427953097262503.* ❖

A Sparse Spring for Flowers

Ginger Soulé

Sadly, the few patches of bluebonnets I see along MoPac are a mere shadow of how they look in a wetter year. Perhaps we'll have one of those again in our lifetime. Ever wonder why even a "minute" rain (about 1/100th of an inch, like what we saw earlier in March) makes everything look a little greener and fresher? There's a reason. In a thunderstorm, the lightening precipitates nitrogen from the air. Dissolved in rain, it falls to earth, benefitting all plants. A freebie every gardener loves!

Continued on page 10

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A Sparse Spring for Flowers

Continued from page 9

As a totally compulsive gardener, I can't resist walking through every nursery I can find to see what's available to tempt me. I confess to a whole lot of frustration when I see some of the offerings at big box stores. Top down management is just as prevalent in huge businesses as in government. All botany and biology is highly specific. Yet the planning in big box businesses relies on growing a limited number of plants grown in a few locations because this is "cost effective," though not botanically effective. (Just because they will grow where they are being propagated doesn't mean they'll work here). I see way too many plants for sale that will not thrive in our CURRENT central Texas climate.

Fortunately, the City of Austin and Texas AgriLife Extension Service have collaborated on a really helpful booklet on the best adapted plants, grasses and trees for our area. It is titled "Native and Adapted Landscape Plants," an earthwise guide for Central Texas. All the locally owned nurseries oriented to our local growing conditions usually have this in stock and many give it away free. It is a wonderful reference guide with much valuable information – essential for those who want to update their landscapes with more drought tolerant yet attractive plants. I hope this information will be helpful to anyone planning to "redo" a landscape this year.

I confess to indulging my love of spring and fall flowering bulbs as well as iris and day lilies. Yet I also have many native and adapted shrubs and perennials that need virtually no care. They have truly been a blessing for their ability to soldier on despite difficult summers of late, thus allowing me time to indulge and enjoy my favorites. And just to tempt your interest, in addition to Red Spider Lilies (Lycoris) and School House Lilies, try planting some rain lilies for fall bloom. It is delightful how they just spring up and bloom after a rain or generous watering in September and October. Whatever your personal favorites, we have a wonderful neighborhood to garden in. I hope you enjoy it as much as I do! ❖

Get Out and Vote in the May 11 AISD Bond Election

Karen Moore

At the February AISD Board Meeting, the Board of Trustees approved a May bond election to fund improvements of the schools in our community. The election will be held May 11, 2013, with early voting April 29, 2013 through May 7, 2013.

Proceeds of the bond will be used for capital improvements of our schools, not their day-to-day operating expenses. Every school in AISD will benefit from the bond program, some more than others. Factors include, but are not limited

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to, current and projected population figures, program needs, and the condition of current facilities. Complete bond information along with specific information per campus may be found at the AISD Bond website: *www.austinisd.org/bond* or by calling 414-BOND (2663).

The AISD bond program was developed over a nine month period with the recommendations of the Citizen's Bond Advisory Committee (CBAC). The CBAC held over 18 public meetings and two public hearings to solicit community input. Many Allandale, Brentwood, Crestview, and Highland Park area neighbors attended and / or spoke at these meetings to bring improvements to their schools.

The bond program is divided into four propositions, totaling $892.2 million, with improvements for specific schools crossing over into several categories. Per AISD, if the four Propositions pass, the average taxpayer will pay an additional $70 annually for a home worth approximately $200,000 for the duration of the bond program. However, homeowners over the age of 65 who have an existing, approved tax ceiling certification would not see any impact on their property tax bill. Per the Texas Bond Review Board, AISD current debt stands at $1.12 billion ($750,598,879 principal, $371,691,350 interest, $1,122,290,228 total). Approval of all four proposals would bring AISD's debt to more than $2 billion. See *http://austinisd.org/bond/election-information/financial-assumptions* for more detailed financial aspects of the bond.

Gullett, Lamar, and McCallum will benefit from all four of the bond propositions

The Allandale feeder pattern of Gullett Elementary, Lamar Middle School, and McCallum High School will benefit from all four of the bond propositions. All schools will receive general maintenance and improvements, increases in their security systems, and technology upgrades; some will receive sewage, roofing, sidewalks and / or HVAC updates. Gullett will receive expansion of its administrative offices as well as its library. Lamar will receive funds for the renovation of the Career and Technology Education labs, expansion of the kitchen of its Foods Lab, and an addition and renovation of its Fine Arts Lab, providing increased teaching spaces to accommodate the Fine Arts Academy enrollment growth.

Some of the McCallum improvements slated will include the construction of a new dance facility; renovations to special education classrooms, the media technology studio, and the credit recovery lab; a classroom / computer lab conversion; and an expanded food lab. McCallum will also receive athletics improvements including new outdoor bleachers, locker room and weight room renovations, and running track and practice field improvements.

Thus, it is very important that our neighborhood gets out and votes on May 11. If this is not convenient, early voting runs April 29 through May 7. Visit *www.traviscountyclerk.org* or 845-4996 for polling places as the date approaches; you can also visit *www.austinisd.org/*bond for more information if needed. ❖

Screen Porches in Allandale

Continued from front page

neighborhood recently added one. Is there a trend? According to Devon Bijansky, one of the neighbors who responded to the posting, her designer told her when they were designing their house in 2010 that a screen porch is one of her most common remodel jobs.

In addition to myself and Devon Bijansky, three other neighbors provided me with information and a photo about their screen porches. Like the Bijanskys, the Parks have a relatively new house and included a screen porch in the initial design. The other three screen porch owners had their porches added on.

What follows is information about each of the screen porches along with photos that these neighbors submitted.

Molly Parks on Bull Creek Road

How long have you had your screen porch?

We rebuilt our home in 2010 with the screen porch as a main focus in how we would utilize living space in our home.

How big is it?

Roughly 180 square feet with a vaulted ceiling.

Why did you decide to add a screen porch?

As mentioned before, we had the screen porch in mind when we designed our space. We oriented the screen porch to take advantage of southerly winds. We positioned a stair tower on the opposite side of the home to draw air through the house and out the clerestory windows. This effect is called a thermal syphon and helps to cool the house naturally on temperate days. No need for air conditioner in the spring and fall!

What do you use it for?

Living and entertainment space on nice, temperate days. We have a fireplace in the screen porch so we can use it all year long!

What type of floor do you have in your screen porch: scored concrete, wooden deck, tile, other?

We have a rock-salt concrete floor and are soon going to be staining and sealing it. We have been invited to the Austin Cool House Tour so we have a lot of "wrap up" projects to complete prior to June 2!

Parks screen porch on Bull Creek

If you had to rebuild it, would you do anything different?

It's just how we envisioned. I may have added a cable outlet so we could watch sports, but that's something we can always add later!

Pam Lawrence on Shoal Creek Boulevard

How long have you had your screen porch?

Four years.

How big is it?

Approximately 12 feet by 12 feet.

Why did you decide to add a screen porch?

To expand living space upstairs (it adds a nice touch to the bedroom suite), for outdoor privacy, and for something that is nice for guests.

Outside view of Lawrence Screen Porch on Shoal Creek

What do you use it for?

Swinging in the hammock, enjoying nice weather and thunderstorms, reading, and relaxing. Our granddaughter plays out there with her toys or uses it for art projects.

What type of floor do you have in your screen porch: scored concrete, wooden deck, tile, other?

Slate

If you had to rebuild it, would you do anything different?

The ceiling fan is too high– we will be lowering it. We would have done a better job of sealing the floor under the slate tile; we are concerned about how it drains because it is on the second floor (It doesn't take on rain but would be nice to be able to hose it down now and then). I also would have put in a couple more electrical outlets.

We love this porch. It was not cheap but it gets a lot of use.

Devon Bijansky on Greenlawn

How long have you had your screen porch?

It was built with the house in 2010.

How big is it?

Approximately 10 feet by 20 feet.

Why did you decide to add a screen porch?

The designer we used for the house told us that screening in porches is her most common remodel job, so we decided to screen it in and widen it by two feet (it was originally drawn as eight by 20 feet).

What do you use it for?

It's on the south side of the house, so it's an oven on summer afternoons, but we enjoy having brunch out on the porch and even had Thanksgiving din-

Bijansky screened porch on Greenlawn

ner on the porch in 2011. We also use it for grilling and reading on nice days.

What type of floor do you have in your screen porch: scored concrete, wooden deck, tile, other?

It has a concrete floor that we covered in ipe (Brazilian hardwood) tiles.

If you had to rebuild it, would you do anything different?

Maybe make it wider (in the short dimension)? We are generally very happy with it.

Gloria Mata Pennington on Shoal Creek Boulevard

How long have you had your screen porch?

16 years

How big is it?

10 feet by 12 feet

Why did you decide to add a screen porch?

Decided to enclose and screen in our deck, add lights and a ceiling fan to minimize mosquitos and enjoy the area more.

What do you use it for?

Sun porch, green house, additional space. My dog loves to lie in the sun on the couch out there, I love to sit and enjoy the morning breeze while I have my coffee. It can accommodate a table for four for dinner outdoors.

What type of floor do you have in your screen porch: scored concrete, wooden deck, tile, other?

Wooden deck.

If you had to rebuild it, would you do anything different?

Maybe add some sort of sliding glass windows to keep the rain from blowing in.

Tom Linehan on Bullard Drive

How long have you had your screen porch?

Eight years.

How big is it?

16 feet by 21 feet

Why did you decide to add a screen porch?

It is an inexpensive way of adding square footage. Because we can use it six or seven months out of the year, it is like having another room. Out backyard faces the creek and we have a lot of mosquitos, so it is a way for us to enjoy the outdoors during the evening summer months without having to worry about them.

What do you use it for?

Opening our door to the screen porch lets us get a draft going in the house, which makes it possible to go without the air conditioner a little longer in the spring. We have a hammock on our porch which makes it a nice space for reading and relaxing. We also use it for plants and brewing beer.

Mata Pennington Screen Porch on Shoal Creek

What type of floor do you have in your screen porch: scored concrete, wooden deck, tile, other?

Scored concrete.

If you had to rebuild it, would you do anything different?

Nothing, we really enjoy it. ❖

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Crane Flies

Wizzie Brown

Crane fly

Crane flies can be small to large insects, topping out at about one inch, with long, slender legs and a V-shaped suture on the thorax. Legs tend to break off very easily, so you may often encounter these insects with less than 6 legs (see image). Adults are often mistaken for giant mosquitoes and may frighten some people.

Crane flies are often referred to as "mosquito hawks." The name mosquito hawk is usually used to refer to dragonflies, but sometimes is also used to refer to a large species of mosquito with a larval stage that feeds on other mosquito species.

Some people think that crane flies eat mosquitoes, but this is untrue. Adult crane flies feed on nectar or are non-feeding.

Crane fly larvae are found in moist soil feeding on decaying organic matter. The larvae are wormlike and legless without well-developed heads. Some species of the larvae feed on roots of turfgrass or other plants. Crane fly larvae usually do not cause enough damage to be considered a pest, but with very high populations management may be needed.

In Texas, crane flies can become abundant in the spring. While the adults may become a nuisance coming into homes or disturbing outdoor activities, they do not cause damage and do not bite. You can keep them out of your home by keeping doors and windows closed and making sure that screens are in good repair. Either turn off outside lights at night or use "bug bulbs" to reduce the number of crane flies that are drawn near the home because of light sources.

For more information or help with identification, contact Wizzie Brown, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Program Specialist, at 854-9600. Also check out *www.urban-ipm.blogspot.com.* ❖

Chicken Squawk 5: The Chicken or the Egg?

Angela Caras

Now that we have (finally!) gotten through some preliminary issues, it's time to start considering the fun stuff: what kind of chickens do you want, where will you get them, and how many will you have?

A lot of these questions depend on the answer to one other question, which is this: what age chickens do you want? You can get egg-laying hens, pullets of various ages, chicks, and just plain eggs. Each of these has its advantages and its disadvantages, so, without spending too much time wondering which should come first, let's just start with the egg.

Hatching eggs, as any grade schooler can tell you, is a super cool science experiment, and one that has an awesome payoff at the end. Actually each stage of the journey is amazing. I hatched eggs as a science experiment in junior high, and I remember checking the temperature every

Continued on page 16

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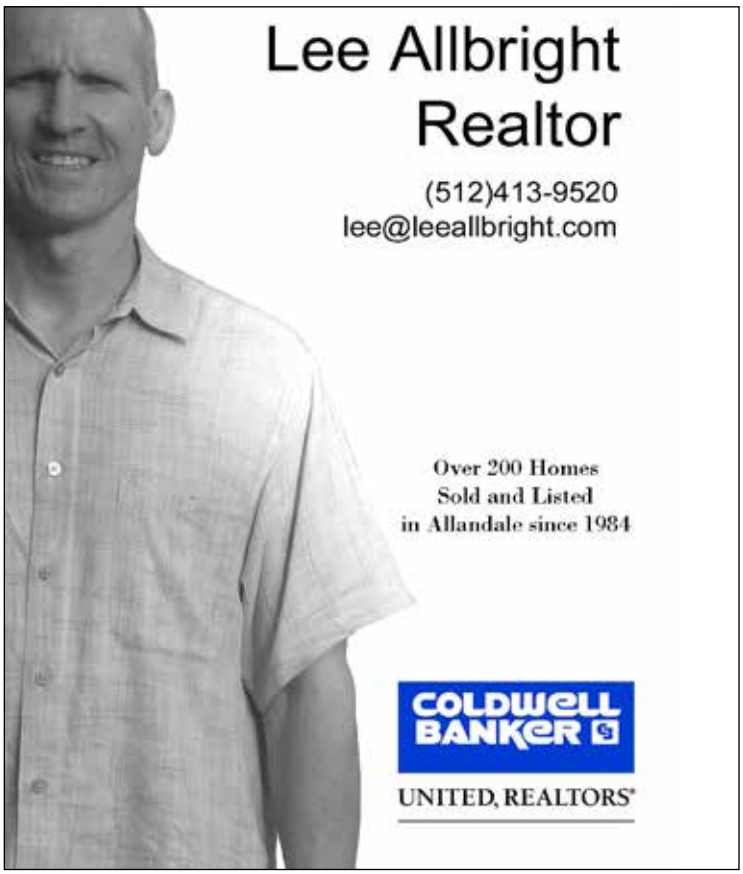

Chicken Squawk 5: The Chicken or the Egg?

Continued from page 15

day, rotating the eggs, candling (so cool!), and then those final days when you swore you could hear peeping from inside and then those fluffy little bundles pecked their way out. It's hard to beat hatching your own pets. Additionally, if you choose to hatch your own chicks, you will have access to probably the widest variety of chicken breeds, as eggs are much more easily shipped than chicks or, of course, grown chickens. This is also the cheapest way to buy chickens.

However, there are two drawbacks, one that is fairly easily surmounted and one that is not. The first is that you will need hatching equipment, not to mention a special cage and a heat lamp. The reason this is fairly easily surmounted is that it shouldn't be too hard to find someone who will lend you theirs, particularly if there are a couple of chicks in it for them. The second, however, needs to be thoroughly considered: buying eggs, you have no control over the sex of chicks that hatch. Even if you're a gambling type, you have to realize that you're not likely to get only female chicks, and finding a home for cockerels is not that easy. Believe me, there isn't exactly a long line of people perusing Craigslist every day, hoping for some chicks that will grow up to be roosters. The only people who will gladly take your cockerels (for free, of course) are those who intend to eat them. If you've hatched them from eggs it might be a little difficult emotionally to deal with that.

So what about chicks?

Allandale neighbor Amelie Ruggero shows off her new chick, Maggie

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Chicks are still super adorable, and they can be purchased at various ages. What's more, chicks usually come "sexed," meaning that someone has examined them and is pretty sure that you're only getting females (not 100% sure, mind you; maybe more like 90%). Additionally, you can purchase a pretty wide variety of chicks online and have them shipped straight to your door. And did I mention that they are super adorable? It's hard not to love something that says "peep."

There are drawbacks to buying chicks too, of course. First, most chicks aren't ready to ship before March, but by the time March comes it can already be really hot in Texas, and the journey will not be an easy one for your chicks, no matter how many holes are poked in their box. I have ordered live plants shipped in March several times, and I have finally given up: they just don't make it through the rough shipping process, not to mention almost a whole day in a hot UPS truck. This is one of the reasons your more reputable chicken sellers will often send an extra chick in the box. But I can't imagine anything more distressing than opening a box of chicks and finding one or more of them dead.

Additionally, if you want to raise chicks you'll need more special equipment: a wire cage, a heat lamp (NOT a regular light bulb), special chick food, and special chick feeding dishes. It's likely that your chicks will need to be kept inside for at least a few weeks, so your house will soon smell like chickens. Also, chicks are, of course, more physically vulnerable than older chickens and will need more care.

So what about pullets? Technically the word pullet refers to any female chicken over a week old that has not started laying yet. However, most people use the word to refer to a female chicken that has started growing her adult feathers. These chickens are hardier than chicks, and unless the weather is extreme you can put them outside (although you might want to hold off free-ranging them, as they're still quite small and are thus a potential meal for many, many animals). And, if you're looking for more exotic chickens, you can still find a pretty good variety available at the pullet stage. However, pullets cost more than eggs or chickens, and sometimes almost as much as full-grown hens.

Of course, one drawback to buying any young chicken is that it will take a while before your chickens start laying. Most chickens will start laying when they are between five and six months of age. If having eggs is your primary concern, you might want to consider hens. In fact, we bought our first chickens are full-grown hens from Callahans; those girls were laying eggs the day after we brought them home. Also, even though they were raised in distressingly small cages at Callahans, with little apparent human contact, they took to being outside immediately, and became super friendly in no time (hint for making chickens like you: worms). Also, it's hard to mistakenly get a rooster when you're buying a full-grown chicken (avoid the ones that are crowing and you should be fine). Of course, one problem with buying hens is that if you don't buy them from a reputable dealer, it's hard to know exactly how old they are, and therefore what their productive life looks like.

Second grader Raleigh Savage holds a chick recently hatched at Gullett Elementary

Ultimately, your decision will probably boil down to three things: (1) how much time and effort you want to invest before you start getting eggs, (2) whether you want exotic breeds or not, and (3) how much you're willing to risk buying male chickens. Oh, and of course there is (4) how important cuteness is to you (or your children). It is almost impossible to overstate how darn cute little chicks are. No matter what you decide, I'm sure the beginning of your chicken raising experience will be exciting and fun. ❖

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Fourth of July Parade

Marlene Meador (with historic background from B.C. and Jackie Allen)

Before anyone can remember, and well before the Allandale Neighborhood Association (ANA) was founded, a wonderful couple who lived on Bullard decided that the capital city of Texas needed a Fourth of July parade. And thanks to Reverend Thomas Lovett and Johnnye Jean Lovett the Allandale Neighborhood Parade began. It was not until around 1964 that a group of neighbors got together in the backyard of B.C. and Jackie Allen and the beginnings of Allandale Neighborhood Association first came to light. These creative, civic minded individuals organized to work toward a common goal to protect the neighborhood from flooding and have some fun along the way. Many of the original families of this neighborhood have moved away but they have left a legacy of memories we all cherish. To them we say a heartfelt and long overdue THANK YOU.

How many of us remember the sound of "Big Red" firing up and driving children of all ages around the neighborhood before and after the parade? Or who hasn't run out to buy red, white and blue decorations for our child to decorate a wagon or tricycle? And as the children grow older, I for one find it incredible that the only morning in all of summer that my teenager got out of bed before noon was on July 4 to go watch or ride in the parade. There is something about the fun, the pride in our amazing country, and the chance to visit with our neighbors, that brings us all together every year to celebrate.

The ANA parade has grown from a few floats and Boy Scout troops to include a wonderful array of vintage vehicles, floats, and hundreds of individuals marching down Bullard to cheers and applause from neighbors and friends. 2013 marks the 10th anniversary of the Blue Santa Toy Drive (sponsored by the Hot Potato Queens), and it is our hope that we collect a trailer full of toys for the underprivileged children of Austin. Please bring donations of toys to the parade and exchange them for a small token of appreciation from the Hot Potato Queens.

Arguably the ANA parade is the annual high point of the neighborhood association events. For the last few years our Parade Marshall, Sir Joe Reynolds, and Parade President Lady Donna Beth McCormick have joined forces to present the best parade and neighborhood party imaginable. From the stirring patriotic music to the wonderful snow cones and ice cream, this is an event for the whole family to enjoy.

Plans for this year's parade are already underway and we could use your help to

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make this the best parade ever. We will need individuals to assist with advance preparations, volunteers the day of the event, and folks to assist with wrap-up and clean-up. If you are interested in contributing time and energy to this fun event please contact the event co-chairs by email.

ANA Event Co-Chairs:
Marlene Meador *LMMeador1@sbcglobal.net*
Laura Slaughter *Laura_Slaughter@hotmail.com*❖

Interview with Jon Etkins, Allandale Mailing List Moderator

How long have you lived in Austin and in Allandale?

Austin, 15 years; Allandale, 14.

What do you like best about Allandale?

I like that it's an established neighborhood in a great part of town, within easy reach of pretty much everything I need.

What made you want to get more involved with the neighborhood association?

I've been corresponding online since the days of FidoNet, and during that time I've managed and / or moderated quite a few forums and discussion lists. When the previous Allandale moderator announced he was looking to retire a few years ago, it seemed like a good opportunity to give a little back to the neighborhood.

If you had out of town guests come to visit, where would you take them?

If they're friends of mine, they're probably in town for a motor race, so we'll be off to the Circuit of the Americas! If it's their first time in Austin, we'll usually give them our "two-bob tour" which usually takes in downtown, the 360 bridge, and a few other points of interest in between.

What music are you listening to right now?

Prog Rock and a bunch of Australian bands from the 70's and 80's. Early Genesis, early Tull, Roxy Music, Midnight Oil, Sebastian Hardy, Cold Chisel, Skyhooks, and many more that you've probably never heard of.

What are you reading right now?

The Adobe Lightroom 4 Book

Jon Etkins, Allandale Mailing List Moderator

What recent addition to Allandale are you most excited about?

It's actually just across the road from Allandale, but I've enjoyed Pinthouse Pizza a few times now.

What do you think is the biggest issue facing Allandale right now?

The Burnet Rd corridor south of 2222. ❖

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Gullett Good News

Stephanie Schulz

Generous Gullett Community Makes April feel like a Holiday

Christmas in April? It felt a little bit like it at Gullett Elementary School this past month. First, Mother Ginger, who apparently snuck away from the Nutcracker, visited the school. Underneath that huge costume was in fact Librarian Kay Gooch, living up to her 2013 BookSpring promise. If Gullett wins, she said, she'd do an encore performance of Mother Ginger on the school blacktop.

The big news is that Gullett students did win, raising $38,000 to buy books for kids in Austin who can't afford them. This number far exceeded previous years when winners (often Gullett, winning seven of the last eight years) have raised around $25,000. Through BookSpring's childhood literacy programs, children ages birth to 12 years, teen parents and parents of young children get books and reading education.

"Ms. Gooch is hilarious," said one parent in the audience. "How does she come up with these things?"

The spirit of giving didn't end with BookSpring. The following day, Gullett parents and supporters donned their best 80s outfits and celebrated at the Gecko Gala. While the kids watched a movie in the cafeteria and played some outside games, parents were busy eating fabulous food from Craig O's, participating in the 80s sing-along by the Alamo Drafthouse and playing vintage video games provided by Game Plan. Best of all, the parents were bidding on items in Gullett's auction, the proceeds of which all went to the school. Many got great prizes – restaurant gift cards from Eastside Café, Fonda San Miguel, Uchi and many more; teacher playdates like gym time with Ms. Brauss, bowling with the fifth grade teachers, tech time with Ms. Southwell and even a basketball showdown with Mr. Butler and Mr. DeAtley. There were also entertainment prizes like movie tickets, guitar concerts and Toros' games, and SO much more! Live auction items included Naming your Own Pizza at CraigO's. To find out who won, readers will have to have dinner – and possibly the new pizza – at Craig O's.

Kristin Knifton was in charge of the Gala, and gave a recap of the successful evening. "We truly have a wonderful, fun and generous community and that is what makes Gullett such a special place to learn and grow."

Finally, our fifth graders joined together this year to put on the Burundi Bazaar in early April. Selling crafts and running games and hiring musicians, the fifth graders were raising money to provide clean water to the citizens of the Songa region of Burundi. Gullett fifth graders joined 35 other area school participating in A Legacy of Giving, partnering with Austin-based non-profit the Gazelle Foundation to learn about, advocate and walk for clean water. Gecko fifth graders were part of 8,000 students across the city working to inform their 20,000 schoolmates, friends, family and community on how they can help. The Legacy of Living project culminated on Saturday, April 27, with a 3.7-mile walk to celebrate raising the funds to bring clean water to Africa. The fifth graders will dedicate their related mosaic project on Saturday, May 18.

The Gullett Fine Arts Extravaganza was another fun event at the school. The all-day event featured many amazing works of art created by our students. There was music, food, arts and more as the festivities stretched into the evening.

Gullett kids closed April and started May with screen-free week. During this week, students are challenged to put walk away from computers, turn off televisions and get outside and play. "I don't like screen-free week," said a third grade boy, "but my mom really likes it so much that sometimes she plans more screen free days and weeks."

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Gullett: Sporty, Green

The Geckos made more than $1,000 on a one-day plant sale at the school in late March. Parents and neighbors flocked to the school to buy cucumbers, basil, squash tomatoes and more. The Green and Grounds Teams also gave seedlings to other schools so they could start their own gardens. And, the Gecko Green Team helped make Sports Day more green by encouraging kids to bring their own water bottles and by offering healthy green snacks with little or no packaging.

Speaking of Sports Day -- every Gecko Students' favorite day was celebrated just before Spring Break. Sports Days were lots of fun, and just a little bit wet for the older kids. Patti Brauss forged ahead despite the slightly wet weather. The result? Lots of happy, muddy, tired kids ready for a spring break!

Easy Money

Shop at Amazon.com and give back to Gullett at the same time! Parents and other interested parties can simply use Gullett's unique Amazon School Rewards link when shopping: *http://www.amazon.com/?tag=gulletgeckos-20* (Note only one "t" in "gullet"). The school earns 4-8 percent on all purchases made.

This May at Gullett

On May 7, Gullett will welcome next year's incoming kindergartners. On this day, soon-to-be Geckos and their parents fill out the paperwork and get a sneak peak at kindergarten classrooms. During that same week, students will celebrate their teachers. May 6-10 is teacher appreciation week. Parents and neighbors were also invited to the school on May 7 to enjoy "It's Easy Being Green," a third-grade concert. This early week in May culminates with the Mother's Day Picnic (bring your tissues) for kindergarten mothers.

Gecko students who like an academic challenge will compete in the UIL Academic Meet on Saturday, May 18. The event will take place at Baldwin Elementary School.

Good-By 2012-2013 School year

There are a few happenings that mark the end of the year that the entire student body looks forward to. The Half-Price Book Fair is May 22-24, where all can get great deals on good reads. Geckos will show off their biggest talents at the Talent Shows on June 3 and 4, always an entertaining event.

The fifth graders get some special treatment at the end of the year as well. They will have their dance on Friday, May 31 at 6:00 p.m This is a special night for fifth graders only to celebrate their successes at Gullett as they prepare to venture out into middle school. The fifth grade promotion ceremony and picnic is the last day of school, June 5.

Looking ahead:

April 28-May 4: Screen-free week
Friday, May 3, 8:00 a.m.: Principal's chat on STAAR scores, budgets and staffing
May 7: Kinder roundup
May 6-10: Teacher appreciation week
May 7, 7:00 p.m. Third grade performance, It's Easy Being Green
May 10: Kinder mothers day picnic
Saturday, May 18: Dedication of fifth grade mosaic project; UIL May 18: UIL Academic Meet, Baldwin Elementary
May 21-23: Half-Price Book Fair
Tuesday, May 21: Choir performance: Music across the decades
Monday, May 27: Staff, student holiday
Friday, May 31: Fifth grade dance
June 3: Primary talent show
June 4: Upper grades talent show
June 5: Fifth grade promotion, last day of school and Gecko party at NW Pool.
Aug. 26: First day of 2013-14 school year ❖

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Community Announcements

Mary Jane Winslow and Christine Staples

Happy 95th!

Mary Jane Winslow, on Silverleaf Drive, celebrated her 95th birthday and 50th year as an Allandale resident at the home of her neighbors, Chris and Christine Staples, on Thursday, April, 18. ❖

First Annual Shoal Creek Community Arts & Crafts & Flea Market Festival

Memorial Day Weekend
May 25 and 26, 10:00 a.m. to dusk
Mary Arnett

Over Memorial Day Weekend, Saturday May 25 and Sunday May 26, residents of North Shoal Creek, Allandale, Wooten, Crestview and Brentwood are invited to participate in this first annual arts and crafts and flea market event hosted by our business neighbor, Shoal Crossing Event Center, conveniently located along the northbound MoPac access road just north of Steck. We will have tents up, so the event will happen rain or shine. There will also be a Plant and Book Swap area, fun for the kids, food and drink, and lots to browse for the grownups. Stay tuned on the list-serv for more details. Plenty of parking and shady trees for a comfortable and fun day with your area neighbors. For more information, please contact Mary Arnett, 803-1540 or *mossrock3209@yahoo.com*. ❖

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